

By Senator Rich

34-1415B-07

See HB

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to child care; creating s.

3 402.3012, F.S.; establishing the Florida's

4 Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating System, a

5 voluntary rating system, in the Agency for

6 Workforce Innovation; providing quality rating

7 requirements for early learning programs, child

8 care facilities, and facilities participating

9 in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education

10 Program; establishing a voluntary pilot program

11 in specified counties; providing financial

12 incentives for advancement in quality rating;

13 providing for technical support; providing for

14 expiration of the program; requiring the Office

15 of Early Learning within the Agency for

16 Workforce Innovation to develop a workforce

17 development plan; providing an appropriation;

18 providing an effective date.

19

20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

21

22 Section 1. Section 402.3012, Florida Statutes, is

23 created to read:

24 402.3012 Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating

25 System.--

26 (1) FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE STATE STARS QUALITY RATING

27 SYSTEM.--The Office of Early Learning within the Agency for

28 Workforce Innovation shall establish the Florida's Sunshine

29 State Stars Quality Rating System to provide a voluntary,

30 statewide standard rating system for licensed early learning

31 programs, child care facilities as defined in s. 402.302, and

1 facilities participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten
2 Education Program created under s. 1002.53.

3 (a) The rating system shall consist of five tiers. For
4 the purposes of this section, a "tier" refers to each level of
5 progression and represents a higher level of quality within
6 the quality rating system. To communicate the level of quality
7 to parents, consumers, and the participating early learning
8 program, a star symbol shall be used. Programs that meet the
9 highest level of quality in the rating system shall be awarded
10 five stars.

11 (b) Programs must meet all the criteria of a tier
12 before advancing to the next tier. The office shall be
13 responsible for implementing the requirements for each tier in
14 each category based upon recommendations of the Early Learning
15 Advisory Council's Quality Rating System Task Force and
16 recommendations from organized meetings to gather local input
17 from parent and provider focus groups and interviews.

18 (2) REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES AND
19 FACILITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN
20 EDUCATION PROGRAM.--

21 (a) Overall quality rating assessment shall be based
22 on the following major components that have been documented by
23 research or best practices to positively impact child and
24 family outcomes:

- 25 1. Learning environment.
- 26 2. Curricula, screening, and assessment.
- 27 3. Staff qualifications.
- 28 4. Professional development.
- 29 5. Business practices.
- 30 6. Family involvement.

31

1 (b) Advancement through the tiers in each major
2 component shall be based on the following:

3 1. Learning environment, verified through document
4 submission or use of the appropriate Early Childhood
5 Environment Rating Scales (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer).

6 2. Curricula, screening, and assessment, verified
7 through document review and observation.

8 3. Staff qualifications, verified by linkage with
9 licensing and document review.

10 4. Professional development for the director, lead
11 teacher, and assistant teacher, verified by linkage with
12 licensing and document review.

13 5. Business practices, verified by document review and
14 observation. Consideration shall be given to child care
15 providers possessing a Gold Seal Quality Care designation and
16 Head Start and Early Head Start programs of quality and
17 excellence.

18 6. Family involvement, verified through document
19 review.

20 Section 2. Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality
21 Rating System Voluntary Pilot Program.--

22 (1) FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE STATE STARS QUALITY RATING
23 SYSTEM VOLUNTARY PILOT PROGRAM.--Florida's Sunshine State
24 Stars Quality Rating System voluntary pilot program is created
25 for the implementation of the rating system tier program in
26 the following counties: Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Leon,
27 Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas. The identified
28 counties include urban counties and rural counties that have
29 established or are in the process of establishing quality
30 rating systems.

31

1 (2) FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE RATING
2 SYSTEM.--

3 (a) Centers and programs in tiers 1, 2, and 3 shall be
4 eligible for grants and awards to improve quality.

5 (b) Centers and programs in tiers 4 and 5 shall be
6 eligible for merit awards to maintain high quality.

7 (3) TECHNICAL SUPPORT.--Technical support shall be
8 provided to programs to ensure successful entry into the
9 rating system and movement through the system. The Office of
10 Early Learning within the Agency for Workforce Innovation
11 shall coordinate with the participating early learning
12 coalitions to facilitate the successful participation of child
13 care facilities in the pilot program and with those programs
14 currently implementing a quality rating system.

15 (4) OTHER COUNTIES.--Nothing in this section shall
16 preclude early learning coalitions from implementing a quality
17 rating system in other counties.

18 (5) EXPIRATION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM.--The pilot
19 program shall expire on July 1, 2009.

20 Section 3. In order to ensure the availability of
21 qualified teachers to meet the needs associated with higher
22 standards, the Office of Early Learning within the Agency for
23 Workforce Innovation shall develop a workforce development
24 plan. The plan shall include recommendations for the funding
25 and expansion of current child care professional development
26 credentialing programs, such as the Teacher Education and
27 Compensation Helps program (TEACH), as well as other programs
28 designed to provide professional development, credentialing,
29 and advanced education.

30 Section 4. The sum of \$25 million is appropriated from
31 the General Revenue Fund to the Agency for Workforce

1 Innovation for the 2007-2008 fiscal year to implement the
2 provisions of this act.

3 Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
4 law.

5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31